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ABSTRACT

Acknowledging that the Latin American cultural concept of "machismo" influences the way in which Brazilian managers tend to use authority rather than communication when resolving disputes with subordinates, a study compared Brazilian and American male managers' self-reported preferences for resolving disputes with employees and peer managers. Forty American and 40 Brazilian males in middle and top management positions each read a packet of four scripts describing various problems that a manager might have with an employee or another manager of equal status. Subjects were then interviewed to determine how they would resolve the problems. Responses were assigned to one of three classifications: communication, organizational power, or mixed approach. Results indicated consistent differences between American and Brazilian managers in their preferred ways of resolving disputes with employees and peer managers. American managers appeared somewhat more flexible as indicated by their greater use of communication strategies, while Brazilian managers appeared much more likely to respond rigidly and authoritatively to real and perceived insubordination. The only instance in which Brazilian managers were likely to use communication was when an employee appeared justifiably reluctant to take on a new task not included in his or her job description. Although it appeared that Brazilian managers are more authoritarian in their treatment of employees than are American managers, it should not be inferred that they are less communicatively competent than American managers. (HTH)

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MACHISMO AS A FACTOR AFFECTING THE USE OF POWER AND COMMUNICATION IN THE MANAGING OF PERSONNEL DISPUTES: BRAZILIAN VERSUS AMERICAN MEN MANAGERS

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AMERICAN MEN MANAGERS

ABSTRACT

This study is an extension of an ongoing line of research contrasting Brazilian and American managers' approaches toward the resolution of personnel disputes. Based on self-report interview data, the results of this study indicate that in contrast with American men managers, Brazilian men managers are more likely to use power rather than communication (negotiation) to gain personnel compliance with company policies and managers' instructions. These results are discussed in terms of cross-cultural differences between Brazilian and American societies, with particular attention given to Machismo as a possible mitigating factor accounting for the greater use of power among Brazilian men managers.

MACHISMO AS A FACTOR AFFECTING
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Presently, little is known about the impact of culture on management style. Recently, Rossi and Todd-Mancillas (1985a) reported differences between American and Brazilian women's management styles, as indicated during self-report interviews. Specifically, Brazilian women were found to be somewhat more prone than American women to use power rather than communication when resolving disputes with employees. Rossi and Todd-Mancillas offer an explanation for why Brazilian women may be more prone to use power than communication.

Since there are relatively few women managers in Brazil--in any event, far fewer than what is found in the United States--Brazilian women managers have fewer women role models to emulate. Most of their models are male mentors, who as a result of the influence of machismo--and in contrast with their American counterparts--tend to assign overwhelming importance to their own views of reality, assert authoritarian control over women and subordinates (Bustos, 1976), "brook no opposition nor share power with anyone else" (Stevens quoted in Chaney, 1971), as reported by Jacquette (1976), believe that decisions made by individuals (i.e., themselves) are superior to decisions made by groups (Hofstede, 1980), and respond with hostility and intransigence when their authority is threatened (Christiensen, 1975; Paz, 1962).

Given the above culturally effected personality dispositions, it is logical to anticipate Latin American managers to differ from Americans in their use of more power and less communication and negotiation when resolving

disputes with subordinates. This is not to say, of course, that there is a complete absence of machismo in the United States, but only that it is well established that Brazilian and other Latin American cultures manifest more machismo than is generally typical of American culture (Saffioti, 1976).

Rossi and Todd-Mancillas' initial report is limited in its potential for validating their machismo hypothesis because only women participants are discussed in that paper. More telling evidence in support of their hypothesis would be availed if contrasts are made between Brazilian and American men managers. Accordingly, this paper reports the results of subsequent analyses contrasting Brazilian and American men's self-reported preferences for resolving disputes with employees and peer managers.

PROCEDURES

Interviewees

All 80 managers (40 American men, 40 Brazilian men) participating in this study worked in middle and top management positions. The American managers work and live in a mid-sized mid-western community; the Brazilian managers work and live in Porto Alegre, a mid-sized Brazilian coastal city.

Data Collection Procedure

Each manager was asked to read a packet of four scripts describing various problems that a manager might have with an employee or another manager of equal status as themself. Each of these scripts described critical incidents validated by previous research as personnel problems frequently encountered by managers (Rossi & Wolesensky, 1983). While these scripts were initially constructed on the basis of interviews conducted with American managers (Wolesensky, 1981), they are also representative of personnel problems encountered by Brazilian managers.

Script A describes an instance in which an employee expresses reluctance to do an assigned task not included in his/her job description

(see Appendix A). Script B describes an instance in which an employee violates (apparently inadvertently) the established chain of command (see Appendix B). Script C involves a dispute in which an employee challenges the manager's competence to give correct instructions on how to do an assigned task (see Appendix D). Script D is different from the others in that it involves a dispute between a newly hired high-level employee and other high-level employees (managers), who challenge the former's authority to introduce a change in termination policy. Further, Script D contains sufficient ambiguity to make less than clear whether the newly hired high-level employee has the authority to impose changes in personnel policy on the managers.

Scripts were utilized matching all possible combinations of American and Brazilian managers with male and female employees. After reading the scripts, respondents were interviewed to determine how they would resolve the problems.

Coding Procedures

Using a previously established and validated coding procedure (Rossi & Todd-Mancillas, 1985b), the responses were read and assigned to one of three classifications. Responses were assigned a Communication classification if they indicated that the primary means of resolving the dispute was through discussion with the employee, which--to a significant extent--reflected objective consideration of the employee's perspective and used neither coercion nor threat, but rather nonmanipulative persuasion in obtaining compliance (see Appendix E).

Responses were assigned an Organizational Power classification if they indicated that the employee would be forced to follow the manager's directives (or sanctioned for presumably not having followed them in the first place). Usually, responses received organization power classifications

for one of two reasons: (a) the respondent made an explicit comment to the effect that the employee would be reprimanded or threatened with dismissal; (b) the respondent did not imply in any way that she would consider objectively the employee's reasons for objecting to or possibly having inadvertently violated the managerial directive in question (see Appendix E).

Lastly, responses were assigned a Mixed Approach classification if they included both an indication to discuss objectively the problem with the employee, coupled with either an implicit or explicit threat of sanction should the employee refuse to comply with the manager's directives (see Appendix E).

Data Analysis Procedures

After the responses were coded into communication, organizational power, and mixed approach categories, 2 X 3 contingency tables were constructed, preliminary to the analysis of the data using X^2 tests. Then, 2 X 3 X^2 tests were conducted separately for American and Brazilian managers to determine whether they responded differently to male employees than female employees (see Tables 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, and 14). If both tests were found nonsignificant and, therefore, it appeared that American and Brazilian managers responded similarly to male and female employees, the data for male and female employees were combined and a X^2 test was then conducted to determine whether American managers differed from Brazilian managers in their overall response styles (see Tables 3 and 10). If it appeared that American and Brazilian managers did not differ in their response profiles, then the data were combined and a one-way (1 X 3) X^2 test was conducted to determine whether both American and Brazilian managers preferred one response type over the others (see Tables 4 and 11). In general, significant X^2 tests were followed by simpler X^2 tests to tease out the conceptually meaningful relationships attributable to managerial nationality, response style, and gender of employee.

All X^2 tests were considered significant if the obtained X^2 exceeded 5.99 the critical X^2 needed at the .05 level of significance, with df = 2 (Siegel, 1956).

RESULTS

Script A: Employee Reluctantly Complies With Manager's Order To Do Task Not Included In Current Job Description

Analysis of these data indicated that: neither American nor Brazilian managers reported any significant tendency to treat male employees differently from female employees (see Tables 1 and 2); American and Brazilian managers did not differ significantly from one another in the ways in which they would attempt to resolve disputes with employees objecting to their being asked to do something they thought was not in their job description (see Table 3); nor did any of the three response styles appear preferable to any of the others (see Table 4).

Script B: Employee Goes Beyond Boundaries Of Authority And Violates Chain Of Command

Analysis of these data indicated that: American managers reported a significant preference for using more power--but less communication--when resolving disputes with female, but not male employees (see Tables 5 and 6). Brazilian managers, however, did not respond any differently to male than female employees and in both instances relied heavily upon power as a means of insisting that employees not go beyond the boundaries of their authority (see Table 7).

Script C: Employee Challenges Manager's Competence To Give Correct Instructions On How To Do An Assigned Task

Analysis of these data indicated that both American and Brazilian managers respond similarly to male and female employees challenging their competence to give instructions (see Tables 8 and 9). Further it is apparent

that American and Brazilian managers have highly similar preferences (see Table 10) for using power as a means of sanctioning employees challenging their competence (see Table 11).

Script D: High-Level Employee's Authority Is Challenged By Other High-Level Employees (Peer Managers)

Analysis of these data indicate significant differences between the response styles of American and Brazilian managers. While American managers reported a tendency to treat male and female peer managers similarly by relying mostly on communication as a means of managing conflict (see Table 12), Brazilian managers reported a significantly greater tendency to use power as a means of resolving disputes with female peer managers, but communication when resolving disputes with male peer managers (see Tables 13 and 14).

DISCUSSION

Results of the data analysis indicate consistent differences between American and Brazilian managers in their preferred ways of resolving disputes with employees and peer managers. Basically, American managers appear somewhat more flexible as indicated by their greater use of communication strategies, while Brazilian managers appear much more likely to respond rigidly and authoritatively to real and perceived insubordination. In fact, the only instance in which Brazilian managers were likely to use communication was when an employee appeared justifiably reluctant to take on a new task not included in their job description (Script A).

When employees appeared to have violated the established chain of command, American managers were more likely to discuss the difficulty with their male employees, but respond more rigidly and authoritatively to female employees. Brazilian managers evidenced no similar tendency to treat male employees differently from female employees and dealt authoritatively with both of them (see Script B).

Both American and Brazilian managers were likely to use power to sanction employees challenging their competence to give instructions (Script C), but only Brazilian managers indicated intent to treat female peer managers differently from male peer managers through greater reliance on power.

It would appear, then, that Brazilian managers are more authoritarian in their treatment of employees than are American managers. This tendency would be in keeping with the machismo literature indicating that macho personalities tend to be more hostile and defensive in their response to threat (Christiensen, 1975; Paz, 1962).

However, simply because Brazilian managers appear--as per the results of this study--more authoritarian than American managers, it should not also be inferred that they are less communicatively competent than American managers. In referring to the work of Forgas (1979), Spitzberg and Cupach (1984) remind us that communication competence may be largely contextually and culturally determined. Thus, while American culture may preclude more liberal use of power when resolving disputes with employees and peers, it may not only be appropriate but necessary to do so in Brazilian managerial contexts, contexts subsumed within a larger cultural milieu, which has traditions at least somewhat more machismo than what exist in the United States.

Of course, as Wiemann (1977) implied in his groundbreaking article on competence, to adequately assess whether a given communication transaction is competent, we must learn from all relevant participants' perspectives two things: their transaction goals; i.e., what they hope to get out of the interaction; and their judgments of how successfully self and others have met those goals. Insofar as this study is based merely on managerial and not also employee perspectives, it is not possible to conclude with assurance that Brazilian and American managers are similarly

competent in their resolution of disputes with employees. Such would be an appropriate and interesting question for future research.

In conclusion, this study is the first reported in the field of communication contrasting American and Brazilian men managers' conflict management styles. The results are interesting in they they lend credence to the speculation that cultural differences are manifested in the way that managers resolve conflicts with their employees. Future research might extend these findings to other Latin American cultures, where machismo also plays an important role in the everyday behavior of men--both in and out of the work place.

Appendix A

(Script A)

Employee Reluctantly Complies With Manager's Order

To Do Task Not Included In Current Job Description

Mario is the supervisor of several employees in the stock room at an organization. Just recently, the position of inventory control clerk was eliminated. Mario's employees are now responsible for controlling and monitoring the amount of inventory on hand. Mario says, "When an order came in, I assigned the task of doing the inventory work to one of the clerks. She appeared angry, but did do the inventory control work. I found out later, via the grapevine, that the clerk felt she should not have had to do the inventorying. She felt that it was my responsibility to do it with her. The communication problem in this situation was persuading her, after the fact, that it was now her responsibility to inventory the stock unpacked. I was met with lots of resistance, because it was her expectation that this was my responsibility and vice-versa."

Mário supervisiona diversos funcionários no setor de estoque de uma companhia. Recentemente a posição do empregado que fazia o balanço das mercadorias foi eliminada na companhia. Agora os empregados de Mário são responsáveis pelo controle e balanço do estoque. Mário diz que "quando recebemos um carregamento, eu solicitei a uma das funcionárias para fazer o balanço das mercadorias. Ela ficou braba, mas terminou por fazer. Descobri mais tarde, através de boato no escritório, que a funcionária disse que não deveria ser obrigada a fazer o balanço, pois acreditava que isto era minha responsabilidade. O problema nesta situação foi o de persuadí-la, depois do fato ter ocorrido, de que de agora em diante ela seria responsável pelo balanço das mercadorias. Encontrei muita resistencia de sua parte, pois ela achava que era minha obrigação fazer o balanço e vice-versa."

Table 1 (Script A)

American Managers

	Communication	Power	Mixed
Male Employees	7	3	10
Female Employees	9	5	4

$x^2 = 5.33$

Table 2 (Script A)

Brazilian Managers

	Communication	Power	Mixed
Male Employees	9	7	4
Female Employees	4	9	6

$x^2 = 2.55$

Table 3 (Script A)

American Managers Contrasted With Brazilian Managers

	Communication	Power	Mixed
Americans	16	8	14
Brazilians	13	16	10

$X^2 = 3.61$

Table 4 (Script A)

Data From American And Brazilian Managers Combined

	Communication	Power	Mixed
American and Brazilian Managers	29	24	24

$X^2 = .65$

Appendix B

(Script B)

Employee Goes Beyond Boundaries of Authority

and Violates Chain of Command

Joseph is a supervisor of a senior clerk and several entry-level clerks in an organization, but he and the senior clerk have experienced difficulties in defining the boundaries of authority in the department. "For example," Joseph says, "He had been given responsibility for calculating the statistics of a report that is published by another department. When he encountered an error in some of this data, rather than coming to me with it, he went to the other department manager. This angered the other manager, since he felt that my subordinate should have checked with me before coming to him. I also felt that this was the case, so it was very difficult for me to support my subordinate when the angered department manager contacted me to complain about the senior clerk's "uppity" behavior. If he (the senior clerk) had just come to me first, we could had gone together to the department manager, and none of the anger would have occurred, and lots of time would have been saved in clarifying the error."

Nilo supervisiona um datilógrafo e vários outros funcionários em uma companhia. Entretanto, ele e o funcionário tiveram alguma dificuldade em estabelecer o parâmetro de autoridade do datilógrafo no departamento. "Por exemplo," disse Nilo, "o datilógrafo era responsável pelo cálculo de um relatório estatístico que era publicado por um outro departamento. Quando encontrou um erro nos dados fornecidos pelo outro departamento, em vez de me comunicar sobre isto, foi direto ao supervisor do outro departamento. O supervisor ficou irritado, pois achava que meu funcionário deveria ter me consultado antes. Eu também achei que o funcionário não agiu corretamente e por isso foi difícil para mim dar-lhe apoio quando o outro supervisor veio reclamar. Se meu datilógrafo tivesse me consultado, nós teríamos ido juntos falar com o supervisor e assim nada disto teria ocorrido e nos teríamos poupado tempo e energia, esclarecendo a atitude do datilógrafo."

Table 5 (Script B)

American Managers

	Communication	Power	Mixed
Male Employees	5	5	10
Female Employees	1	13	5

NOTE: Because two cells had expected frequencies less than 5, the communication and mixed cells were combined (see Table 6). The resulting X^2 value (7.39) indicates that American Managers had a significantly greater preference for using more power--but less communication--when interacting with female than male employees.

Table 6 (Script B)

American Managers

	Communication or Mixed	Power
Male Employees	15	5
Female Employees	6	13

$X^2 = 7.39$

Table 7 (Script B)

Brazilian Managers

	Communication	Power	Mixed
Male Employees	1	19	0
Female Employees	1	17	2

NOTE: In the above table, at least two of the six cells have expected frequencies less than 5. Accordingly, it was not appropriate to compute X^2 values (Siegle, 1956). However, inspection of the tables makes apparent that Brazilian managers identified power usage as the preferred option for dealing with both male and female employees.

Appendix C

(Script C)

Employee Challenges Manager's Competence To Give Correct Instructions on How To Do an Assigned Task

Ken was hired by a local company not only to manager the office, but also to check the accuracy of the work being done by the employees. In this capacity, he not only instructs people in the office about how certain procedures are to be carried out, but also is responsible for giving them feedback when they make mistakes. One of the female employees in the office repeatedly made the same mistake in completing a form. When Ken went to her for the third time to explain how the form was to be completed, she "told me that she didn't think I was right. She suggested that I call the head office and make sure that my instructions were correct. I walked away knowing that I was right, but I called the office anyway. As I suspected, I was right. Only after she had seen me call the head office and get their information did she accept the fact that she was doing something wrong and that my suggestions were right. My feedback alone was not enough, though."

Luiz foi admitido em uma companhia local não apenas para chefiar o escritório como também para checar a precisão do trabalho executado pelos empregados. Neste sentido, tinha que instruir os funcionários daquele setor sobre a maneira como certos procedimentos deveriam ser executados e fazer comentários quando encontrasse erros. Uma funcionária no escritório, continuamente, cometia o mesmo erro ao completar um formulário. Quando Luiz a abordou pela terceira vez para explicar como o formulário deveria ser preenchido, a funcionária disse que "ela achava que eu estava errado e sugeriu que eu chamasse o escritório central para confirmar minha informação. Afastei-me da funcionária, sabendo que estava correto, mas chamei o escritório de qualquer maneira para satisfazê-la. Como achava, eu estava correto. Apenas depois de presenciar meu telefonema é que a funcionária admitiu estar errada. Portanto, minha instrução por si só não foi suficiente para convencê-la a preencher o formulário como eu estava dizendo."

Table 8 (Script C)

American Managers

	Communication	Power	Mixed
Male Employees	3	15	2
Female Employees	2	13	5

Table 9 (Script C)

Brazilian Managers

	Communication	Power	Mixed
Male Employees	2	15	3
Female Employees	2	16	2

NOTE: In each of the above tables, at least two of the six cells have expected frequencies less than 5. Accordingly, it was not appropriate to compute X^2 values. However, inspection of the tables makes apparent that both American and Brazilian managers respond similarly to male and female employees.

Table 10 (Script C)

American Managers Contrasted With Brazilian Managers

	Communication	Power	Mixed
Americans	5	28	7
Brazilians	4	31	5

$X^2 = 1.98$

Table 11 (Script C)

Data From American And Brazilian Managers Combined

	Communication	Power	Mixed
American and Brazilian Managers	9	59	12

$X^2 = 47.92$

Appendix D

(Script D)

High-Level Employee's Authority Is Challenged

By Other High-Level Employees (Managers)

John was hired by his employer to develop personnel policies and procedures. The organization had tripled in size since its creation, and the need for someone in this capacity was apparent to his employer. As John familiarized himself with the organization, he realized the need for reports which specified a supervisor's reason (s) for terminating an employee. All of the supervisors in the organization were men. They reacted to John's procedure by telling him that the forms were unnecessary, and since they hadn't done this type of reporting before, why did they need to now. John said, "I had to persuade them of the importance of this type of documentation. Two of the supervisors even went to my boss and asked about the necessity of such reports. It was fortunate that my boss endorsed me. However, a great deal of time was wasted in persuading the supervisors. I felt as if I had to defend not only the credibility of the reporting, but also my credibility."

Juca foi admitido por seu patrão para desenvolver procedimentos e normas envolvendo problemas de demissão no departamento de pessoal. A companhia em que trabalhava havia triplicado em tamanho desde sua criação e a necessidade de re-organização nesta área era aparente ao empregador. Enquanto Juca se familiarizava com os procedimentos e normas em vigor na companhia, ele se deu conta da necessidade de relatórios especificando a razão para demissão de funcionários. Os gerentes da companhia reagiram às modificações sugeridas por Juca dizendo que os formulários que ele queria implementar não eram necessários e, como eles nunca precisaram preencher tais formulários antes, não viam qualquer razão para fazê-lo agora. Juca disse, "eu tive que persuadir aqueles gerentes da necessidade deste tipo de documentação. Dois dos gerentes inclusive foram perguntar ao meu patrão sobre a necessidade de tais formulários. Felizmente, meu patrão me deu apoio. Entretanto, muito tempo foi disperdiçado persuadindo os gerentes. Neste caso, tive que defender não apenas a credibilidade dos formulários, como também minha própria credibilidade."

Table 12 (Script D)

American Managers

	Communication	Power	Mixed
Male Peers	3	5	12
Female Peers	6	4	9

NOTE: Because expected frequencies were less than 5 for greater than 20% of the cells, it was not appropriate to compare X^2 for this contingency table. Moreover, neither would it appear fruittul to compare X^2 on a 2 x 2 contingency table which would result trom combining the mixed and communication categories. However, inspection of this table indicates highly similar responses to male and female peers with some form of communication predominating as a preferred option.

Table 13 (Script D)

Brazilian Managers

	Communication	Power	Mixed
Male Managers	12	6	2
Female Managers	1	16	3

NOTE: Because expected frequencies were less than 5 for greater than 20% of the cells, it was not appropriate to compute X^2 for this contingency table (Siegel, 1956). However, mere inspection of the table indicates that men managers were far more likely to communicate with other male managers than with female managers. By collapsing the communication and mixed categories together, a 2 x 2 contingency table was constructed and an appropriate X^2 computed (see Table 14). Indeed, the resulting $X^2 = 10.10$ indicates Brazilian men managers were significantly more likely to use communication when resolving disputes with high-level male employees, but power when resolving disputes with high-level female employees.

Table 14 (Script D)

Brazilian Managers

	Communication or Mixed	Power
Male Managers	14	6
Female Managers	4	16

$x^2 = 10.10$

Appendix E

Examples Of Response Using Mostly Communication

American Managers

Mario should have stated his confidence in the employee's ability to do the job and should have explained about the elimination of the inventory control clerk's position. I would try to make her understand what her position involved and to motivate her right at the beginning of the project. I would sit down and see what people resource I had available and try to find someone who had special interest in that position.

Brazilian Managers

Eu envolveria os outros supervisores na minha decisão. Levaria mais tempo de imediato, mas a longo prazo pouparia tempo.

I'd involve the other supervisors in my decision. It'd take longer, but in the long run we could save time.

Examples of Responses Using Mostly Power

American Managers

This is reason for termination. If I'm responsible for the accuracy of the work in the organization, the person couldn't question my instruction.

Brazilian Managers

Eu pediria desculpas ao outro gerente e demitiria o datilógrafo. Eu pediria que um memorando circulasse entre todos os funcionários clarificando as linhas de comunicação na organização.

I'd apologize to the other manager and terminate the clerk. I'd ask that a memo would be sent out to all employees clarifying the lines of communication in the organization.

Appendix E (continued)

Examples Of Responses Using Combination Of Communication And Power

American Manager

I think the problem here is lack of job description. The line of reporting isn't well laid out and the clerk wasn't correctly informed. I'd write a memo to all employees explaining their role in the organization, and I'd also meet with the senior clerk saying that it was my fault that things happened that way, but that from now on we have another procedure. I also would have supported the clerk with the other manager. However, if the clerk did it intentionally, then it would be another reason for dismissal.

Brazilian Manager

Eu informaria a funcionária de sua nova tarefa e enfatizaria suas qualidades para fazer o trabalho.

I'd inform the employee of her new duty and would emphasize her qualities to perform the job.

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